
Iowa Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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State Capitol
Des Moines, IA 50319
September 20, 2001

Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School

ISSUE

This **Issue Review** provides background information relating to the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School at Vinton. The School is governed by the Iowa Board of Regents.

AFFECTED AGENCIES

Board of Regents

CODE AUTHORITY

Chapter 269, Code of Iowa

BACKGROUND

The Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School (IBSSS) was founded in 1852 as a private school in Keokuk. Within a year, it was established by the General Assembly and relocated to Iowa City. In 1862, as a result of a gift of 55 acres of land to the State for the purpose, a new school facility was constructed on a permanent site at Vinton.

Section 269.1, Code of Iowa, states that:

“Any resident of the State under 21 years of age who has a visual disability too severe to acquire a satisfactory education in a regular educational environment shall be entitled to an education in the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School at the expense of the State.”

The three steps required for accessing services of the School are:

1. Identification by an area education agency that the student is visually impaired.
2. Assignment of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) Team that includes a representative from IBSSS. The Team specifies the services the student is to receive.
3. Completion of an estimate of the duration of services and anticipated date for the student to return to the local school district. Although individual plans and placements are reviewed annually, enrollment may be for a shorter period.

The School resides under the authority of Iowa's Board of Regents, which is also the governing body for the three State universities and the Iowa School for the Deaf in Council Bluffs.

Funding

The main source of revenue for the School is the State General Fund. General Fund appropriations accounted for 77.5% of all revenues for FY 2001 and are budgeted to account for 72.3% in FY 2002. See **Table 1** below for revenue and expenditure history of all funds for the School for the past five years.

Table 1
Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School – All Funds

	Actual FY 1998	Actual FY 1999	Actual FY 2000	Actual FY 2001	Budget FY 2002
Revenues					
State Appropriations					
General Fund	\$ 4,008,852	\$ 4,155,415	\$ 4,432,925	\$ 4,568,379	\$ 4,454,332
Educational Excellence	64,230	60,189	54,644	86,712	86,712
School Technology	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	5,000
Regent Technology	0	5,000	395	0	
Supplemental	0	0	0	0	
Capitals	95,000	6,000	212,773	19,985	400,000
Other Revenues					
Federal Support	398,062	365,009	504,798	391,931	521,591
Interest	21,542	20,510	26,120	22,107	23,000
Reimbursed Indirect Costs	20,224	18,644	26,048	25,694	38,734
Sales and Services	359,813	530,212	616,520	795,258	1,032,620
Other Income	121,165	186,530	181,683	124,075	282,812
Total Revenues	<u>\$ 5,103,888</u>	<u>\$ 5,362,509</u>	<u>\$ 6,070,906</u>	<u>\$ 6,049,141</u>	<u>\$ 6,844,801</u>
Expenditures					
Faculty Salaries	\$ 1,990,290	\$ 1,989,677	\$ 2,176,481	\$ 2,396,165	\$ 2,686,517
Professional & Scientific Salaries	209,718	327,062	381,383	436,800	445,498
General Services Salaries	1,704,253	1,679,711	1,700,741	1,811,418	1,921,345
Subtotal	<u>\$ 3,904,261</u>	<u>\$ 3,996,450</u>	<u>\$ 4,258,605</u>	<u>\$ 4,644,383</u>	<u>\$ 5,053,360</u>
Professional & Scientific Supplies	683,827	725,916	853,055	748,667	954,242
Library Acquisition	6,909	6,772	8,439	8,874	7,212
Utilities	110,548	99,549	108,071	151,685	163,822
Building Repairs	140,712	233,818	415,203	437,593	535,257
Auditor of State Reimbursement	25,693	26,163	22,978	21,652	26,754
Equipment	231,938	273,841	404,555	36,287	104,154
Subtotal	<u>\$ 1,199,627</u>	<u>\$ 1,366,059</u>	<u>\$ 1,812,301</u>	<u>\$ 1,404,758</u>	<u>\$ 1,791,441</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>\$ 5,103,888</u>	<u>\$ 5,362,509</u>	<u>\$ 6,070,906</u>	<u>\$ 6,049,141</u>	<u>\$ 6,844,801</u>

Enrollment and Student Characteristics

Residential (on-campus) enrollment at the School has declined from 55 students in FY 1997 to 38 students in FY 2002 (See **Table 2**). This is a decrease of 17 students (30.9%) over the six-year period.

Table 2
Enrollment – FY 1997 to FY 2002

	<u>Residential (On Campus)</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>Nonresidential (Outreach)</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
FY 1997	55		407		462	
FY 1998	45	-18.2%	440	8.1%	485	5.0%
FY 1999	38	-15.6%	531	20.7%	569	17.3%
FY 2000	36	-5.3%	573	7.9%	609	7.0%
FY 2001	33	-8.3%	571	-0.3%	604	-0.8%
FY 2002	38	15.2%	NA	NA		

While all of the students at the School are visually impaired, many of them have multiple disabilities. In a survey completed by the School in 1997-98, results indicate that 79.5% of the School's students had at least one secondary disability. In a national sample taken as part of the same survey, 60.4% of all students surveyed had at least one secondary disability.

Staffing

The School utilized a total of 79.2 FTE positions for FY 2001 as illustrated in **Table 3** below. In addition to these employees, the School contracts for certain special services such as speech pathology and occupational and physical therapy. See **Attachment A** for the School's most recent organizational chart.

Table 3
Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School - FTE Positions - FY 2001

	<u>Instruction (Education)</u>	<u>Academic Support (Outreach)</u>	<u>Student Services (Education)</u>	<u>Institutional Support</u>	<u>Plant Op. & Maintenance</u>	<u>Total</u>
Institutional Officials & Faculty	12.35	6.85	0.00	4.00	0.00	23.20
Professional & Scientific	0.60	1.40	3.82	2.00	1.00	8.82
General Service	11.56	2.25	22.81	2.53	8.00	47.15
	<u>24.51</u>	<u>10.50</u>	<u>26.63</u>	<u>8.53</u>	<u>9.00</u>	<u>79.17</u>

Outreach

Outreach consists of services provided by the School to nonresidential students. While the number of residential students has declined, the number of students served through outreach has increased from 407 students in FY 1997 to 571 students in FY 2001 (See **Table 2**). This is an increase of 164 students (40.3%) over the five-year period. Services provided through outreach include the following:

- Early childhood
- Educational services
 - Teachers of visually impaired
 - State vision consultant
 - State deaf/blind consultant
- Orientation and mobility services
- Low vision services
- Technology services
- Instructional materials center

- Statewide parent and professional development

National Trends and Governance

The most significant national trend is a decrease in the population of all residential schools for the blind. This can be attributed to the enactment of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1977. This Act supports the placement of all children with disabilities in community schools. However, this Act also mandates that all students with disabilities be entitled to a “continuum of services” that includes education within a residential placement if the Individual Education Plan (IEP) indicates such a placement is most appropriate.

The Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School surveyed more than 40 schools in different states to gather information about governance and funding of residential schools for blind students.

Responses indicate:

- Funding - Most residential schools receive funding from state general fund appropriations, either in the form of a direct appropriation or indirectly through the funding mechanism for local school districts. A few states have a dedicated funding source such as lottery proceeds or interest.
- Governance – Of the 47 schools responding, 26 schools (55.3%) were governed by the state department of education, 11 schools (23.4%) were governed by their own dedicated board, four schools (8.5%) were privately operated, three schools (6.4%) – including Iowa - were governed by a board of regents, and three schools (6.4%) were governed by some other method.

BUDGET IMPACT

As shown previously in **Table 1**, the total budget for the School for FY 2001 was \$6.0 million, with \$4.7 million (77.5%) provided by State General Fund appropriations. The total budget is typically allocated into two parts:

- General fund operating budget (see **Table 4** below). This includes the revenues and expenditures dedicated to the daily operation of the School. General fund in this example means the general fund of the school and not the State General Fund. In this illustration, the State General Fund provides 95.1% of the general operating budget for the School.
- Restricted funds. Restricted funds must be used for a designated purpose, such as capitals.

Table 4
General Fund Operating Budget – FY 2001

	Instruction (Education)	Academic Support (Outreach)	Student Service (Education)	Institutional Support	Plant Op. & Maintenance	Total	Percent of Total
Revenues							
State General Fund appropriation	\$ 1,397,934	\$ 635,003	\$ 1,072,778	\$ 747,023	\$ 730,641	\$ 4,583,379	93.3%
Dept. of Education - Ed. Excellence	55,144	10,000	2,000	20,500	0	87,644	1.8%
Regent Technology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Federal Support	63,700	55,990	21,000	0	0	140,690	2.9%
Interest	0	0	0	26,000	0	26,000	0.5%
Reimbursed Indirect Costs	0	23,349	0	0	0	23,349	0.5%
Sales and Services	0	0	0	4,200	46,035	50,235	1.0%
Other Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Total Revenues	\$ 1,516,778	\$ 724,342	\$ 1,095,778	\$ 797,723	\$ 776,676	\$ 4,911,297	100.0%
Expenditures							
Inst. Officials & Faculty Salaries	\$ 872,157	\$ 498,005	\$ 2,761	\$ 346,527	\$ 0	\$ 1,719,450	35.0%
Professional & Scientific Salaries	35,149	71,966	190,236	111,850	54,964	464,165	9.5%
General Services Salaries	491,328	80,315	809,245	132,866	281,766	1,795,520	36.6%
Subtotal	\$ 1,398,634	\$ 650,286	\$ 1,002,242	\$ 591,243	\$ 336,730	\$ 3,979,135	81.0%
Supplies & Services	116,494	67,137	93,536	148,386	124,815	550,368	11.2%
Library Acquisition	1,650	6,919	0	0	0	8,569	0.2%
Utilities	0	0	0	0	152,874	152,874	3.1%
Building Repairs	0	0	0	0	162,257	162,257	3.3%
Auditor of State Reimbursement	0	0	0	26,754	0	26,754	0.5%
Equipment	0	0	0	31,340	0	31,340	0.6%
Subtotal	\$ 118,144	\$ 74,056	\$ 93,536	\$ 206,480	\$ 439,946	\$ 932,162	19.0%
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,516,778	\$ 724,342	\$ 1,095,778	\$ 797,723	\$ 776,676	\$ 4,911,297	100.0%

When viewed on a per pupil basis, the cost to operate the School is significant.

- Residential Students. The FY 2001 cost for residential (on-campus) students is \$126,877 per student. This per pupil cost is calculated by excluding outreach expenditures from the operating budget shown above. The State General Fund share of the residential per pupil cost is approximately \$120,660.
- Nonresidential Students. The FY 2001 cost for nonresidential students is \$1,269 per student. The State General Fund share of the nonresidential per pupil cost is approximately \$1,207.
- All Students. The FY 2001 operating cost for all students is \$8,131. The State General Fund share of the operating cost for all students is approximately \$7,733.

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